

We would ask whether the lately published volume of the illustrated *Flora of North America* is really sufficient to satisfy American botanists in regard to these requirements, so that the *Check-list* may be unanimously adopted. That the *Check-list* and the new *Flora* are closely connected is evident when we look at the names of the authors and contributors, although two have withdrawn from the former publication. We can, therefore, with good reason compare the character of the *Check-list* with that of the illustrated *Flora*, and we feel inclined to think that the order of publication ought to have been first the *Flora* and afterwards the *Check-list*.

Without going into details as to these publications, at least not in this place, we desire to submit the following questions in order to secure an early discussion of the matter:

1. Does the family diagnosis in the illustrated *Flora* seem sufficient to separate closely related families, and have the most important distinctions been given?
2. Does the terminology correspond with well recognized usage at home and abroad?
3. Are the descriptions correct in regard to morphology, as adopted in leading systematic works?
4. Does a consideration of this *Flora* with these questions in mind satisfy the botanist that the authors of the *Check-list* were in full possession of the necessary requirements?—THEO. HOLM, *Washington, D. C.*

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#### THE NATIONAL HERBARIUM AND THE DIVISION OF BOTANY.

*To the Editors of the Botanical Gazette:*—In view of an evident lack of correct information regarding the recent change in the custody of the National Herbarium it has seemed desirable that a brief sketch of the present relationship and work of the Division of Botany and the Herbarium be presented to your readers.

During at least the past three administrations, covering a period of nearly twelve years, there has been a feeling among the authorities of the Department of Agriculture that the Division of Botany should be relieved of the custody of the National Herbarium, that institution having grown beyond a mere consulting herbarium to the dimensions of a great governmental repository of botanical collections, thereby becoming a fit charge for the Smithsonian Institution. As a result of negotiations between the two establishments, the herbarium was transferred about two years ago from the Department of Agriculture to quarters in the fireproof building of the National Museum, which is under the direction of the Smithsonian Institution, the Department, however, continuing to furnish the money for its maintenance.

\* See Holm's letter in *Herb. under Hypoxis*.



But on July 1, 1896, the Museum assumed complete charge of the Herbarium, being enabled to provide for it through an increase of \$10,000 in the appropriations of the Museum, added by Congress for this special purpose. The disbursement of this sum for the National Herbarium is made, therefore, through the Smithsonian Institution. Two assistant curators, Dr. J. N. Rose and Mr. C. L. Pollard, have been transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Museum, with the necessary clerical help, and a new assistant curator of the cryptogamic collections, Mr. O. F. Cook, appointed, the botanist of the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Frederick V. Coville, continuing to serve, without salary, as curator. Provided with a force of ten people, in addition to the curator, situated in fireproof quarters, and managed by the Smithsonian Institution, the National Herbarium is now favorably situated to continue its development as the repository of the botanical collections acquired by the various branches of our government.

The Division of Botany in the Department of Agriculture has now a force of twenty persons, including clerks and laborers, and funds to the amount of \$29,000 available for the expenditures of the present fiscal year. Mr. Frederick V. Coville is botanist and chief of division and is especially engaged in work upon the native plant resources of the United States and upon the geographic distribution of plants. Mr. G. H. Hicks is assistant chief and has special charge of seed investigations and the laboratory equipped for that purpose. Mr. L. H. Dewey has charge of all matters relating to weeds, information about the damage done by them, their present distribution and means of dissemination, ways of holding them in check, and warnings about newly introduced species. Mr. V. K. Chesnut has charge of the pharmacological laboratory and conducts investigations on poisonous plants, more particularly those native species which are a common cause of poisoning in man or domestic animals. Mr. A. J. Pieters has charge of the anatomical and photographic work of the division, and is conducting a special series of experiments on the germination of weed seeds. Mr. W. W. Tracy, recently appointed from the seed farm of D. M. Ferry & Co., has charge of greenhouse and outdoor variety tests of seeds and of the cultivation of native food and other economic plants. Mr. J. C. Dabney is assisting in experiments in seed selection and is making studies of the effect of various chemicals upon germination. Mr. Sothoron Key has charge of laboratory germination tests, is conducting practical trials of the relative merits of various kinds of laboratory apparatus, and is making studies in regermination. Mr. John B. Leiberger is carrying on the greater part of the field work connected with the special studies of the botanist. Mr. F. A. Walpole is the artist of the division, recently appointed after passing the highest examination among twenty-one competitors.

The Division of Botany as at present organized is an establishment



equipped with the best scientifically trained men obtainable, and with the best modern applicances, for the investigation of agricultural botanical problems.—FREDERICK V. COVILLE, *Washington, D. C.*

### THE FLORA OF ALABAMA.

*To the Editors of the Botanical Gazette:* Having just returned from a three months' trip through the north my attention was called yesterday (Sept. 4) for the first time to the severe criticism of my bulletin in the BOTANICAL GAZETTE issued in July. The article would give me little concern but for the unjust charge that I had treated Dr. Mohr with unfairness because he "granted me a favor that has been abused." Eliminate this feature of the "review" and there is little for me to complain of. The article of which I complain is so cruelly unjust and there is such a tone of keen sarcasm pervading the entire paragraph I cannot refrain from entering my protest and demanding at least a fair statement of the facts. There is the most friendly relationship existing between Dr. Mohr and myself, and if there has been any complaint on his part of slight or "favor abused," I am yet to hear of it. A careful reading of the bulletin will show that I have been very punctilious in giving Dr. Mohr ample credit for all the assistance he has rendered me; not only after each species is his name printed, but on page 279 the following occurs: "The author acknowledges with pleasure material assistance from Dr. Chas. Mohr of Mobile in locating many of the species mentioned in this bulletin." In several instances his name is given alone, although I had also gathered specimens in the same county. It seems to me there is no injustice done Dr. Mohr in giving him credit for all information secured from him, and there can be no interference with his proposed work on the botany of Alabama, since my bulletin is simply a list of localities and nothing more, while his book will give full details in all matters relating to the plant. I am confident from what I know of Dr. Mohr he cannot consider my list as antagonistic to his work. Before publishing my bulletin I sent the list of species to Dr. Mohr and requested him to examine it carefully and give me the names of other counties if possible. I stated in my letter that it was my intention to publish the list as one of the bulletins of the state station, and I would like to get his consent to use his information. In reply to this letter he not only gave me the additional counties asked for, but was kind enough to add a few other species to my list (he added 19). I give below a copy of his letter which clearly shows his willingness to permit me to use his information as requested in my letter to him.—P. H. MELL, *Auburn, Alabama.*

MOBILE, March 13, 1896.

PROFESSOR P. H. MELL, *Dear Sir:* Your favor of the 11th came duly to hand. It gives me pleasure to return herewith your list of Leguminosæ and Rosaceæ, accord-